



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

LISA P. JACKSON
Acting Commissioner

February 20, 2006

Dear Flood Area Residents:

Following a major rain storm in the last days of March 2005 and another between Friday, April 1, and Sunday, April 3, 2005, the Delaware River overflowed its banks, flooding an estimated 3,500 homes and forcing the evacuation of more than 5,500 people. In response, Acting Governor Richard J. Codey announced the formation of a Flood Mitigation Task Force to study and implement measures to reduce future impacts of flooding in New Jersey communities. The Task Force convened four public meetings in Warren, Hunterdon, and Mercer Counties to solicit public concern.

I am very pleased to inform you that we are moving forward with the finalization of the Delaware River Flood Mitigation Task Force Report in accordance with the following tentative schedule and timeline:

- Public Comment Period on the Draft Report (February 20 through March 15, 2006)
- Public Meeting on Draft Report (To Be Announced)
- Final Report Submitted to Governor Corzine (April 2006)

As we approach the spring runoff season, I also want you to know that we are not waiting to finalize the report before beginning to undertake recommended actions. Implementation has begun as follows:

1. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has set aside funding required to begin the preparation of new floodplain delineations and associated mapping for the main stem of the Delaware River. This state of the art new mapping will be a valuable resource during times of emergency and for the regulation of land use along the floodplain area.
2. The NJDEP has committed funding to be cost shared with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the preparation of a feasibility study to evaluate possible solutions including flood-proofing and removing or relocating structures within the floodplain of the Mid-Delaware River Basin. The USACE is already working on the preparation of this study.
3. The NJDEP has held a coordination meeting and developed strategies with the NJ Department of Community Affairs (NJDEA) to ensure that building codes in NJ are fully compliant with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). These strategies will reduce potential conflicts between State requirements and the policies of NFIP, especially after flood events when local residents are sometimes caught between local, state and federal standards. Additionally, through these efforts, future exposure to flood hazards will be significantly reduced and residents will be able to continue to obtain federally guaranteed flood insurance policies for their homes.

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4. During our Task Force public hearings concern was expressed over dam releases and overall reservoir management in the States of New York and Pennsylvania which can exacerbate downstream flooding of New Jersey communities. Toward addressing these concerns the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) Flood Advisory Committee has coordinated with the National Weather Service (NWS) about utilizing the NWS Flood Routing model to illustrate the effects of differing scenarios of outflow hydrographs in order to possibly develop a better basin reservoir management strategy. Also, automated real time snowpack monitors are scheduled to be installed in both the Pepacton and Neversink watersheds this year to allow for better management of the snowpack void program. This will help in developing strategies to increase existing flood storage within the Delaware Basin thereby potentially moderating the severity of future flood events.
5. The New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) will clear debris from the locks and bridges along the Delaware Canal before and after major storm events in order to prevent the potential backup of floodwaters during future flood events.
6. The NJ Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) is continuing its coordination efforts with both FEMA and the NJDEP-Green Acres program to secure funding sources to close on property acquisitions in both Pohatcong and Harmony Townships located within the floodplain. This will prevent repetitive future outlays of damage repair money by federal, state, local governments or individuals for the continued future repair of flood damage to these properties.
7. The NJOEM in collaboration with FEMA is developing a toolkit to assist communities with planning and strategies for the development of Pre Disaster Mitigation (PDM) plans, which will be necessary in order for communities to qualify and receive additional flood mitigation funding in the future.

I look forward to your comments and to working with you on the finalization of this important report. Please submit your comments to David Rosenblatt, Administrator of the Office of Engineering and Construction, at dave.rosenblatt@dep.state.nj.us. Please consult the Flood Mitigation Task Force website at www.njflood.org for future announcements regarding the Task Force Report and its implementation. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa P. Jackson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa P. Jackson
Acting Commissioner